

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee
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Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to offer my views about HB 5044, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017.

My name is Gustavo Angarita and live in New Haven

I am here to testify on the Governor's proposed midterm budget adjustments related to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

I am originally from Colombia, South America. As a Colombian, I witnessed first hand the impact that mental illness and substance use disorders have on the persons suffering from those. As a medical student, I noticed that a big challenge for these patients was receiving care in fragmented systems. As part of this, multiple professionals from different disciplines were taking care of the same patient but each treatment was compartmentalized and isolated from the others.

As a former trainee of the Connecticut Mental Health Center and as an Attending Psychiatrist I have had the privilege of being part of an organization that is committed to good communication and collaboration between providers. As specific examples, CMHC reaches out to its patients when they are in the emergency room of the Yale New Haven Hospital, or in a medical floor, in one of the Yale Psychiatry Hospital Inpatient units, or even at their homes when they have crises of difficulties coming to their appointments. Seeing how patients can come to CMHC in Acute Crisis, can come to the Wellness Center for Medical Care, or can come to one of our psychiatry units and receive treatment by providers that collaborate with the outpatient clinicians is an example of an integrated approach to patient's care. After this training and after 4 years of practicing at CMHC, I am comfortable saying that I witness first hand how a community of mental health providers can mobilize resources in a way that overcomes the problems I identified as a medical student but that I could not address back then.

I am convinced that this integration and quality of care is only possible with the resources and supports we currently have, thus, I urge you to protect the health and wellbeing of our CT residents by supporting these essential and core services.

Thank you for your attention to my testimony